

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 184042

12
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R 042255Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

UNCLAS STATE 184042

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: SNAR, BM, TH

SUBJECT: OPIUM CARAVAN

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED AN INQUIRY FROM CONGRESSMAN WOLFF AS TO THE ACCURACY OF AN AP WIRE STORY OF JULY 21 DATEDLINE BANGKOK DESCRIBING AN OPIUM CARAVAN FROM BURMA INTO THAILAND. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR COMMENT ABOUT THE STORY WHICH WE ARE QUOTING BELOW.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: A CARAVAN OF 100 WELL-ARMED CHINESE AND BURMESE BROUGHT AT LEAST THREE TONS OF OPIUM FROM BURMA INTO THAILAND OVER THE WEEKEND, AND FOUR THAI POLICEMEN WERE KILLED TRYING TO STOP THEM, THAI NARCOTICS AUTHORITIES SAID TODAY.

THE OPIUM WAS BELIEVED HEADED FOR SALE ON FOREIGN MARKET, COL. CHAVALIT YODMANEE, CHIEF OF THE POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION DIVISION, SAID.

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PAGE 02 STATE 184042

A SEVEN-MAN PATROL TRIED TO STOP THE CARAVAN NEAR THE THAI-

BURMESE BORDER IN THE NORTHERN THAI PROVINCE OF CHIANG MAI
BUT WAS FORCED TO RETREAT AFTER FOUR OF ITS MEMBERS WERE
KILLED, HE SAID.

CHAVALIT SAID IT WAS THE FIRST OPIUM CARAVAN ENCOUNTERED
SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBO-
DIA IN APRIL.

"WE EXPECT MORE OPIUM CARAVANS MOVING THROUGH NORTHERN
THAILAND SINCE IT WILL BE VERY HARD FOR THEM TO COME
THROUGH LAOS AND OTHER ROUTES IN INDOCHINA," CHAVALIT
SAID. END QUOTE. INGERSOLL

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